

# ARTslant



## [After](#)

Valeska Soares

Eleven Rivington (Rivington Street)

11 Rivington Street, New York, NY 10002

April 29, 2008 - May 25, 2008

## Valeska Soares' After Effects

The effect of viewing Valeska Soares' exhibition *After*, currently in its last week at Eleven Rivington Gallery, is not unlike walking into a room that someone has just left and smelling their fragrance still hanging in the air. Soares' works—*Love Stories II*, *Afterimages*, *Duet*, and *For To* (all 2008)— explore nostalgia, love, and longing by way of still-warm beds and yellowing pages, and she best achieves her themes with *Duet*, a simple but loaded sculpture which bears an obvious human trace. Soares has sculpted the impressions of two sleepers into pillows fashioned from marble and placed them side by side on the gallery's floor. The voyeuristic birds-eye viewpoint and intense intimacy of the piece recall another artist's disarming sculpture, Ron Mueck's *Spooning Couple*, a miniature of a man and woman lying in bed. In *Duet*, all that remains are their ghosts.



The viewer then looks up, at *Afterimages*, an installation of twelve photographs hung high on the gallery's far wall. Each photograph depicts the same patch of sky, seen from one angle down in Soares' garden, and the way the series is displayed places the viewer squarely in her shoes. The press release will tell you that the number of photographs refers to the months in a calendar year, which is an unnecessary and slightly hokey detail. It's better to simply regard the changing clouds and light flickering across this tiny landscape as a slow, romantic animation seen through Soares' eyes. Artists try all sorts of tricks to portray their personal experience of something; here, Soares nails it simply and eloquently.

*Afterimages* is the only introverted piece in the show; *Love Stories II* and *For To*, like *Duet*, place the viewer back out in the realm of universal experience. *Love Stories II* expands on an ongoing project where Soares replicates books containing the word 'love' in the title. Each book contains

the exact number of pages as its real world counterpart but the stories themselves have been erased. 250 of these books are arranged on two shelves with titles facing outward, bound in neatly cadenced colors of gray, gold, and blue. As a whole, the piece is clever but not as transcendent as Soares might wish it to be. *For To*, collages of dedication pages that Soares has excised from various books, feels the same way. It's charming to read the long-lost dedications, but it doesn't go much deeper than that.

This is Soares' first solo gallery exhibition in New York, and it's a brave one because of its unabashed embrace of sentimental, messy themes. Subsequently, the work fares better when it escapes the confines of Soares' more cerebral, one-trick concepts.



- Lauren Knighton

\* images Top to Bottom: *Duet* (from *After*), 2008, Hand carved white marble, unique; *Love Stories II*, 2008, 250 printed and bound books, wood shelves; *Afterimages* (detail), 2008, Twelve photographic archival inkjet prints on canvas, ed. 2/3. All images courtesy Valeska Soares and Eleven Rivington.

Posted by [Trong Gia Nguyen](#) on 5/18/08